

Zika Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC)

Discussion:

Social Pressure, Travel, and Sexual Transmission

Barbara Reynolds, Ph.D.

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RIGHT

The **right** message at the **right** time from the **right** person
can save lives...

What the public seeks from your communication

Five public desires

1. Gain wanted facts.
2. Empower decision making.
3. Be involved as a participant, not spectator.
4. Provide watch guard over resource allocation.
5. Recover or preserve well-being and normalcy.

Audience Relationship to Event



Response during scenario

- Eager to take actions to protect themselves and loved ones
 - Seeking information
 - Determining location of family and friends
 - Leaving the area (radiation)
 - Take action (Botulism—boil water and food)

Risk is Risky

- Risk is in the eye of the beholder
- Probability of harm x Impact of harm=Risk
- Differing assumptions
- Selective omission, inclusion (bias)
- Unknown latent effects

Risk Perceptions

- Research versus real life
- Exposure versus harm
- Allocation of benefits and costs (shared risk)
- Trust, access, confusing language

What Is Vicarious Rehearsal?

- The communication age gives national audiences the experience of local crises.
- These “armchair victims” mentally rehearse recommended courses of actions.
- Recommendations are easier to reject the farther removed the audience is from real threat.

Sources of Social Pressure

- What will I gain?
- What will it cost me?
- What do those important to me want me to do?
- Can I actually carry it out?

Six Principles of CERC

- **Be First:** If the information is yours to provide by organizational authority—do so as soon as possible. If you can't—then explain how you are working to get it.
- **Be Right:** Give facts in increments. Tell people what you know when you know it, tell them what you don't know, and tell them if you will know relevant information later.
- **Be Credible:** Tell the truth. Do not withhold to avoid embarrassment or the possible “panic” that seldom happens. Uncertainty is worse than not knowing—rumors are more damaging than hard truths.

Six Principles of CERC

- **Express Empathy:** Acknowledge in words what people are feeling—it builds trust.
- **Promote Action:** Give people things to do. It calms anxiety and helps restore order.
- **Show Respect:** Treat people the way you want to be treated—the way you want your loved ones treated—always—even when hard decisions must be communicated.

Trust and Mistrust

- Stakeholders judge the response to an issue or crisis based on trust.
- Trust is the natural consequence of promises fulfilled.
- Mistrust is an outgrowth of the perception that promises were broken and values violated.
- CDC fulfills trust by combining our best science with strong ethics and values.

Acting Trustworthy

- Share information early.
- Acknowledge the concerns of others.
- Under promise and over deliver.
- Select a spokesperson who is never condescending.
- Engage third-party validators and advocates.

Risk Communication Resources

- CDC Zika website: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>
- Zika communications resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/comm-resources/index.html>
- CERC resources: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/index.asp>
- Emergency Risk Communication Training: Atlanta, August 10-12, 2016
- To sign up for the Emergency Partners newsletter to receive Zika and other updates from the CDC, please click [here](#)
- Contact cercrequest@cdc.gov for questions

For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 www.cdc.gov

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